



Duxbury Field Notes

By FAHY BYGATE

Despite the blizzard bearing down on us as I write this, spring is officially here. There are so many signs of it, I don't know where to begin. Sunday's beautiful weather brought out the most amazing things in my yard. I was most surprised to find insects! A Spring Azure butterfly flitted about amidst a riot of crocus. This tiny little blue scrap of sky is one of the first butterflies to show up and always thrills me when it does. A Mourning Cloak, another early one, showed up in the yard of a friend in Marshfield.

An Eastern Phoebe is now screeching every morning, right on schedule, at the back of my yard. I heard a second one near the cranberry bog later in the day. Phoebes have been known to drive normal people mad with their incessant buzzy song but I think that its early arrival endears it to many of us and may save it from the murderous intent of the sleep-deprived. When the Phoebe quiets down, we fall asleep to the sounds of Spring Peepers serenading us all night.

Tree Swallows are investigating Duxbury Beach, I hear and Piping Plovers may be back. I haven't yet seen one, but they have been reported. Some of Duxbury's most avid birders combed the beach last week and found a real bonanza of stuff: Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, a possible Goshawk (!), maybe a Merlin, lots of Dunlin, Red Knots, Sanderlings and a real show by the lingering Snowy Owls. Apparently, the Snowy that is marked in green and thought by most of those who have seen it to be the loveliest Snowy ever, approached the birders and behaved in an aggressive way. He swooped around their car, and incredible to me, uttered a sort of croaking noise. I had thought them mute but *The Birder's Handbook*, Ehrlich, Dobkin and Wheye, says that "females territorial, maintaining area with combination of vocal and visual displays." Well, we know this guy is a male so both sexes vocalize and I hope to hear it one day! These owns should be out of here soon, to return to their breeding ground, the Arctic tundra.

Other vernal indicators: Pine Warblers are being reported everywhere, Oystercatchers are back, Turkey Vultures are passing through, lots of Field and Tree Sparrows are around as well as Robins on lawns, Song Sparrows singing, Red-winged Blackbirds creaking and

Duxbury Clipper, Wednesday, April 2, 1997

ducks everywhere. The extremely lucky have seen Snipe and Glossy Ibis. Woodcocks have been doing their thing for weeks now, I will have to get over the Farm in Marshfield soon to witness this amazing courtship display.

But despite all of this avian, lepidopteran and botanical largesse, the best thing to show up in my life this month is none of the above. I have fallen madly in love with a huge, lump of ice. Hale-Bopp is just the most satisfactory comet ever and I go out every clear night to see it. It is moving Westward, it seems, although what I don't know about comets could fill all the books on comets. Still, I cannot get enough of it and I see it as a portent of great things to come: warblers in May!

Artful "Stories" at the ACM

Every picture tells a story, and so does every one of Tasha Stairs' sculpture/collage pieces.

Stairs, whose signature style involves functional works of art decorated with symbolic shards and found fragments, builds legends and anecdotes into every clock, mirror, and box she creates.

The artist will share her unique vision and technique at the Art Complex Museum on Sunday, April 13, at 2, in conjunction with the Duxbury Art Assn winter juried show. She will explain how colors and objects hold emotion and meaning, while demonstrating her techniques for casting and "telling" multi-media visual stories.

Boston Globe Magazine recently featured Stairs' "Hours Drag, Years Fly," a life-cycle clock that serves as a gentle reminder to make the most of every moment. Her work is sold at galleries and gift shops around the country.

With an artistic career that evolved along a winding path that led her through child psychology and engineering, Stairs is an advocate for the creative spark in every person, and hopes that her presentation at the ACM will inspire others to craft their own stories.

The Duxbury Art Assn annual winter juried show continues at the ACM through April 27, along with "Aaron Fink: Hats."

The Art Complex Museum is open Wednesday through Sunday from 1-4. Admission to the museum and artist presentation is free.